

high price for his services—800 strings of cash. The students being unable to raise the

Some time ago your correspondent visited the city of Panning, 50 miles east of Kunming in the much-neglected region of Kiangsu between the Grand Canal and the sea. A new magis-

The merchants here complain of full business, and of the rapid fluctuation in the value of the Mexican dollar. Within the last month the dollar went down rapidly from 350 cash to 280, then rose again to 320, and now has gone down again below 300 cash. A good many shops for several days would not take the dollar at all.

One who has his little worldly all in Mexicans feels like asking the question which the embarrassed member of the House asked in the middle of his speech, "Where am I at?" Indeed that bloated capitalist, the missionary, — whose life in the opinion of some imaginative writers is but a synonym for opulence and luxury — will find it very hard to make both ends meet, if the

festive Mexican continues to coquette with the cash market as it has been doing lately.—N. C. Daily News correspondent.

PEKING AND TIENTSIN.

The river keeps quite open at Taku and the

Bar, and opposite The Farm the river has not yet frozen over this season.

It is reported that Mr. von Brandt is interesting himself on behalf of the promoters of a proposed German store to be started at Peking.

At the opening of the river a Belgian Consul is to be appointed to Tientsin. It is reported that the gentlemen to occupy the post was

There is a split in the Foreign Club at Peking. All the Russians and French have resigned. This step has no political significance. The reason is said to be that the members had the bad taste not to elect any of them as office holders.

We are informed that Monsieur le Comte du Chaylard leaves Tientsin to take up his appointment as Consul General at Shanghai on the opening of the river. Monsieur Ledue, of the Peking Legation, will take the position of French Consul at Tientsin.

We hear that foreigners are occasionally

wrecking outside the settlement at night by Chinese footpads with a view to robbery. This is surely a new departure for Tientsin, and indicates a need for some sort of police protection for those living outside of Municipal limits.

On the 14th January a daring attempt was made to break into the godown of the Standard Oil Company of New York in the extra con-

cession. It appears that the miscreants had taken advantage of the snowstorm to start cutting a hole through the brick wall. There were, it appears, some nine or ten men engaged in the business, two only being caught by the watchmen, the others making good their escape over the high wall.—*Peking and Tientsin Times.*

THE MILITARY FORCES OF THE AUSTRALIAN COLONIES.

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There can be no possible harm in drawing public attention to the very inadequate existing military forces of some—indeed, it may be said all—of the Australian Colonies, when we reflect

that every foreign power is perfectly well acquainted with the facts, facts which, as a matter of mere national insurance, Australians should quickly and thoroughly revise. The Defence force, for example, of New South Wales, which is two-and-a-half times bigger than Great Britain is, all told, about 540 men, of whom 16 are clerks, who would pro-

ably light as well as the rest, but though this little band is undoubtedly composed of the best military material in the world, it is numerically absurd for the duty that might suddenly be thrust upon it. The Volunteers are more imposing certainly as to numbers, but the proper strength does not much exceed 4,000 men all told, and of these only about 50 are

military men! The Cavalry, indeed, total up to about the number of the famous Balachava Six Hundred! Victoria has about 400 regulars, and with volunteers totals up to a paper-army of 6,800. Queensland has 150 regulars, and totals up to 4,500; South Australia has about 80 regulars, and totals up to 2,600; Western Australia has the distinction of two

regulars, and totals up to 600; gallant little
Piemontaise has 22 regulars, and an army of
nearly 2,000 all told; while New Zealand pos-
sesses about 340 regulars and some 8,700
volunteers. Summing up, we find that the
Australasian Colonies have about 1,600 regulars,
which is meant those regularly paid, and the
grand total including regulars 7,000 for New

Zealand, is 28,857. This means about 20,000 for Australia and Tasmania, or, taking only regulars" and deducting New Zealand's contingent and the 22 regulars of Tasmania, we arrive at the final conclusion that to defend the five great continental Colonies; and to stiffen their respective volunteer armies, the total number of regulars is about 30,000. And this is the

These are plain facts and figures, which really furnish their own comments. They are well known, as already stated, to every foreign Power that possesses an intelligence department, and it cannot be justly contended that, whatever may be the skill or devotion of the men composing the permanent regular defence forces, even

could take much account of such so-called "forces" in preparing an offensive expedition with any Australian objective. It is a hard saying, perhaps, to write, but the time has come for the various members of the great group to thoroughly overhaul the details of their defences, and to concert the requisite means for the proper

protection of those vast accumulations of material, means which certainly require a more effective national insurance against war than is given by the existing provisions for meeting the possible attack of a hostile Power. These remarks are not made either in a pessimistic or an alarmist spirit. We apprehend nothing, and we know that in an hour of real peril every

embodied Australian or New Zealander would meet that peril nobly, but it is dread-ful to contemplate the havoc that might ensue the ranks of civil life, owing to compar-atively undisciplined men being suddenly called to encounter regular troops, moved, as they now, with the precision of a machine in smooth working order. The remedy for this

to be found in an increased expenditure on permanent forces, and it is to be feared, in another way. — *Colonies and India.*

SCIENTIFIC MISCELLANY.

The growth of trees at different times of

day has been a subject of experiment by Mr. E. H. Thompson, the Government zoologist of Tasmania, who has contributed results to *Knowledge*. Measurements were taken as far as possible over three hours, the total growth 8½ per cent. was attained between the hours of 6 and 9 a.m., per cent. between 9 a.m. and noon; none

open noon and 3 p.m.; none between 3 and 4; 1½ per cent. between 6 and 9 p.m.; 37 per cent. between 9 and 12 p.m.; and 85 per cent. between midnight and 6 a.m. The fastest growths in twenty-four hours were: rose, 6½ inches; geranium, 5½ inches; oleander, 4½ inches; apple, 2½ inches; pear, 1½ inches.

twenty years ago, states Mr. J. Kersley
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Barometer 4 P.M.	30.19	Therm. 4 P.M. (Wet bulb)	54
Thermom. 9 A.M.	53	Therm. Maximum	56
Thermom. 1 P.M.	54	Therm. Minimum (over	
Thermom. 4 P.M.	51	right).....	54

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 Hongkong, 11th February, 1899. 1453

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Hongkong, 11th, December, 1895. 15

NOTICE OF FIRMS.

NOTICE

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